



# The President's Daily Brief

*March 1, 1975*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

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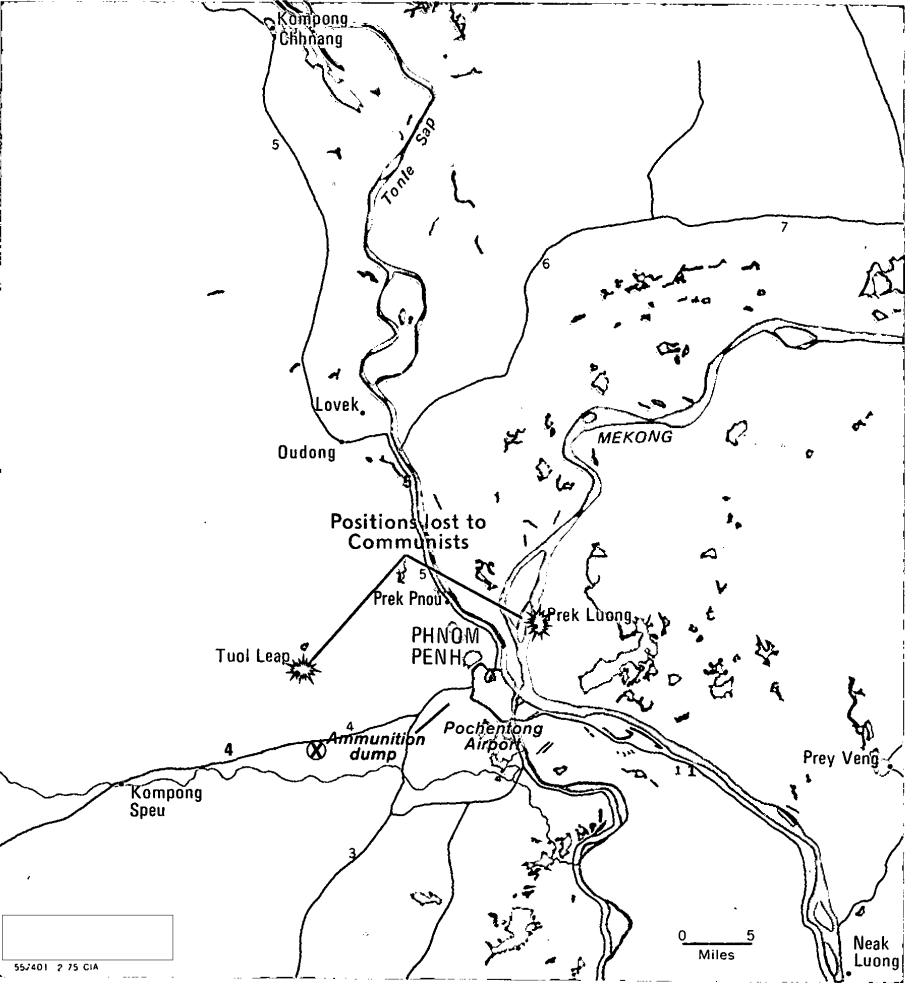
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**CAMBODIA: Phnom Penh Area**



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CAMBODIA

*The capture of Tuol Leap by the Khmer communists yesterday gives them control of approaches to both the ammunition dump at Kantouk and the airfield at Pochentong. Units of the Cambodian army's 1st and 2nd divisions are reinforcing troops in the area in an effort to retake Tuol Leap.*

Government forces northeast of Phnom Penh have abandoned Prek Luong and have evacuated some 300 troops to the capital. This places the communists much closer to Phnom Penh, and increased rocket attacks against the capital can be expected.

Southwest of Phnom Penh the situation appears to be holding. Elements of the 3rd Division are moving to reinforce some positions that have been maintained against repeated communist attacks since early this week.

Cambodian army clearing operations on Route 1 along the Mekong River have made little progress.

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PORTUGAL

*The growing climate of political turmoil in Portugal has spawned new reports of plotting among rightist military officers to overthrow the ruling Armed Forces Movement. There may be some substance to these reports, but we have no persuasive evidence that rightist groups could garner enough support within the country to make a takeover stick even if they were initially successful.*

The leftist-dominated Armed Forces Movement is well entrenched, well armed, and willing to fight to maintain its supremacy. An unsuccessful coup attempt would provide an excellent opportunity for radicals within and outside the Movement to consolidate their power.

The only Portuguese military units that have shown signs of willingness to support a rightist coup effort are:

--A paratroop battalion in Tancos, 75 miles northeast of Lisbon, which is commanded by an officer who reportedly had participated in earlier plotting to restore former president Spínola to power.

--A commando regiment in Amadora, just outside Lisbon.

--Cavalry troops stationed at Santarém, about 40 miles northeast of the capital.

--Some personnel at the military academy in Lisbon.

[redacted] the various anti-regime plotters are determined to act before the election of a constituent assembly on April 12, even though most Portuguese believe the Communists will not do well at the ballot box. The recent declaration by the Armed Forces Movement that, in effect, perpetuates its power after the election may have made the election seem pointless to the rightist plotters and given momentum to their plans.

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EGYPT-PALESTINIANS

*Egyptian officials and information media this week launched a verbal counterattack on the Palestinians for their continued sniping at Egypt's Middle East policies and negotiating tactics.*

President Sadat personally snubbed the Palestinians on Thursday by stating he was unwilling to receive a delegation that the PLO wanted to send to Cairo to resolve current differences. In a reference to the organization's inability to speak with one voice, Sadat said he would talk only with the PLO's entire governing executive committee.

Sadat's move was a direct response to a communiqué issued by the PLO on Wednesday, in which the Palestinians allege that Cairo is preparing to abandon their cause for the sake of limited territorial gains in the Sinai. Since Secretary Kissinger's most recent trip to the area, the Palestinians have repeatedly charged that present settlement efforts are a plot by the US and Israel to find a "partial solution" separating Egypt from Syria and the Palestinians.

Sadat's action is but one more step in his continuing effort to put his dealings with the Palestinians on a more formal basis. By doing so, he could spare himself some of the frustration of attempting to assuage Palestinian sensibilities on a day-to-day basis. Despite his statement on Thursday, Sadat really prefers to deal only with Arafat, who is among the more rational PLO leaders. Sadat has relegated dealings with lesser figures to Foreign Minister Fahmi.

Egyptian newspapers this week attacked the Palestinians, decrying the "hysteria of some who are called Arab revolutionaries." In somewhat defensive language, one editorial argued that the Arabs base their policy on UN resolutions, and that Egypt is simply working toward the implementation of those resolutions.

The Palestinians retaliated against Sadat yesterday by recalling to Beirut the Cairo representatives of the PLO. A Palestinian spokesman had said earlier that Yasir Arafat is not likely to make the visit to Egypt that had been expected soon.

*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

## ISRAEL-LEBANON

*The quiet situation prevailing along the Lebanese-Israeli border appears to be [redacted] agreement between the two governments.*

[redacted]

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The Lebanese army's enforcement of the "truce" rests on [redacted] arrangement worked out with the Palestine Liberation Organization to help restrain fedayeen cross-border operations against Israel. Continuation of the situation thus depends ultimately on the PLO's willingness and ability to control its own and allied guerrilla forces. Only one incident resulting from fedayeen infiltration from southern Lebanon has been reported since the "truce" went into effect on January 31.

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[redacted] Tel Aviv agreed to limit retaliation for minor border incidents in return for a Lebanese commitment to control the fedayeen. [redacted] Israel wants to keep things cooled down, particularly in the present pre-negotiation period.

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[redacted] Beirut and Tel Aviv are anxious to avoid a repetition of the violent incidents in January that culminated in a major Israeli military operation to drive the fedayeen from the southern Lebanese village of Kafr Shuba. Israel is said to be concerned that further incidents might drive Lebanon to accept substantial military aid from the Arab states.

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The Lebanese government has, in fact, been under pressure both at home and from other Arab states to improve its military forces in the wake of the Kafr Shuba incident. Syria and Libya reportedly have already provided the Lebanese with limited numbers of SA-7 ground-to-air missiles, antiaircraft guns, and some ammunition.

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VIETNAM

*North Vietnamese troop infiltration to South Vietnam continued at a moderately heavy rate during the past month, with approximately 22,000 men starting the trek south.*

Hanoi's infiltration effort is running about a third higher than a year ago. During the first three months of the current dry season, the North Vietnamese concentrated on moving manpower to the provinces around Saigon and to the highlands.

For the first time since last summer, troops have also been sent in recent weeks to the north-central coast. As the dry season progresses, it is likely that Hanoi will slow its flow of troops to the southern areas and increase the numbers going to the northern provinces. Last year, Hanoi stopped sending troops to the highlands and the provinces around Saigon in April.

The new troops should reach their destinations during the next few weeks. They appear to be more than sufficient to replace communist losses and strengthen units in preparation for the next round of fighting.

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NOTES

*Canada has decided to give priority attention to renewing the North American air defense agreement. The government's decision came after our expression of concern over its delay in renewing the joint defense arrangement.*

An official of the External Affairs Ministry has told one of our embassy officers that the renewal agreement had received departmental approval and had been sent to the cabinet for final review and consent. He was sure that the Canadian draft would be ready well before the US-Canadian meeting on the subject set for March 18. The Canadians favor renewal of the treaty before it expires on May 12. They want to alter it, however, to give them more control of their airspace, as well as of their forces during emergency alerts. They also want to extend the accord for five years rather than the present two.

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*The EC Council meets in Brussels on Monday and Tuesday, hoping to wrap up the details of Britain's ten-month renegotiation of its EC membership terms and to prepare for a meeting of the nine EC heads of government a week later.*

Our embassy in London concludes from conversations with government and party leaders that, after the heads of government meeting, the Wilson government expects to announce its demands have been met and to recommend continued membership in the EC. Although EC agricultural policy has been a subject of prime British concern, London is probably prepared to live with the limited modifications already adopted. The chief British demands that remain unresolved concern the EC budget and the EC regional development fund. Agreement on these seems likely, perhaps with slight modifications.

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